

Bureau considers many options for Diamond Fork unit of CUP

By Steve Fidel

Deseret News staff writer

There are still more questions than answers about the Diamond Fork power and irrigation system proposed as an element of the Bonneville Unit of the Central Utah Project.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation officials are considering three alternatives to the Diamond Fork project that call for the construction of a dam, a tunnel and at least one power plant between Strawberry Reservoir and Utah Lake. Plan options also involve diking Goshen Bay, draining all but 5 feet of water in Utah Lake and purchasing water shares totaling 50,000 to 60,000 acre-feet from members of the Utah Lake Water Users Association.

The fourth option, proposed by the Strawberry Water Users Association, calls for the association to build the project independently of the bureau.

Bureau officials conducted a "scoping meeting" Thursday evening to present their plan to the public and to gather comments before preparing an environmental impact study that is scheduled for publication in draft form next year. A final environmental impact document would then be published the following year with project construction starting in 1989, said Robert Christensen, a bureau biologist.

All of the options being considered include the construction of power generating facilities that could produce 72 megawatts of electricity, compared to 166 megawatts proposed for the project in 1984. The project was scaled down because of a lack of private sector interest in financing the power.

Of the power generated, 32 megawatts would be used to power CUP pumping stations. The rest would be sold to subsidize the cost of developing 132,000 acre-feet of irrigation water.

Alternative A calls for diking Utah Lake at Goshen Bay and building Mona Reservoir, the Wasatch Aqueduct, the Mona-Nephi Canal, the Nephi-Sevier Canal and other canals and pumping facilities that would distribute project water. The dike would decrease the surface area of the lake to reduce evaporation, generating additional water for irrigating uses.

Alternative C calls for reducing the level of Utah Lake by as much as nine feet to reduce evaporation. The lake is 14 feet deep at best, which means thousands of acres of lake bottom would be exposed, leaving the remaining portion of the lake a scant 5 feet deep. Water would then be transferred to the lake through the existing Strawberry High Line Canal to satisfy the needs of Utah Lake water share owners.

Alternative E, being given the most thought by the bureau, would provide irrigation water by buying Utah Lake water rights for irrigation uses. Those purchases are now being negotiated, according to the bureau.

People attending the meeting brought up a dozen points they wanted the bureau to consider in making its environmental study — and before choosing an option for developing the Diamond Fork system. Some of the questions were:

—What would become of the lake and resulting mud flats if the lake level were lowered drastically?

—Are the necessary number of Utah Lake water shares available for sale?

—What would drying up part of the lake do to temperatures and weather patterns in Utah County?

—What criteria will be used for selecting one of the available options?

Why doesn't the bureau turn the entire project over to the Strawberry Water Users Association?

Milton Theobald, general manager

of the Strawberry Water Users Association, said a 90 megawatt project could be built locally for one-third of

what it would cost the bureau to build the 72 megawatt project, saving the federal government \$300 million.

Theobald said his organization will oppose any project that affects its water supplies or facilities, which all of the bureau's alternatives would do.

Bureau representatives gave few answers to the questions presented at the meeting but promised to address them in a newsletter that will be published soon and circulated to those in attendance.

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EXPEDITION
THROUGH
COLORADO,
UTAH,
ARIZONA,
AND
NEW
MEXICO
IN
1776

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PREFACE

The Dominguez-Escalante State-Federal Bicentennial Committee was organized in November 1973. In the spirit of the Founding Fathers, the committee members adopted a compact giving as their purpose

to commemorate the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante Expedition as a major feature of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona through cooperative State/Federal planning and implementation. This historic 1776 Spanish expedition was a major contribution to the exploration of the American Southwest, which increased available geographic knowledge leading directly to the later development of the Old Spanish Trail(s) linking the Spanish settlements. The Dominguez-Escalante Expedition was coincident with the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution in the Eastern Section of the new Nation, whose side was soon to be joined by Spain as an important contributing ally in the struggle for independence.

Representatives from the State Bicentennial Commissions of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona, from federal agencies administering properties within the region, from state historical societies and tourism interests, and from the private sector pursued their objective of a coordinated commemoration and celebration of that historic 1776 expedition.

With a grant from the Four Corners Regional Commission, the Dominguez-Escalante State-Federal Bicentennial Committee, under the research chairmanship of Mr. W. L. Rusho, contracted a research program with the Utah State Historical Society. Under the direction

of Dr. David E. Miller that project has been completed, resulting in a definitive report of the exact route covered by the padres. The research grant also sponsored this translation of the padres' journal by Fray Angelico Chavez of Santa Fe.

The Dominguez-Escalante State-Federal Bicentennial Committee also contracted with the Architects/Planners Alliance for a master interpretive plan. It is intended that this plan will give unity to the variety of commemorative efforts anticipated by many agencies and groups.

This plan will also prove useful to those people participating in the Dominguez-Escalante Bicentennial Expedition, which is scheduled to leave Santa Fe on July 29, 1976, exactly two hundred years after the padres. Their route and itinerary will follow closely those of the original trek.

Finally, the plan will be invaluable to those groups producing commemorative signs, brochures, interpretive displays, ramadas, or museums, and who, thereby, wish to tell this tale of the American Southwest in 1776. Tourists should find the story, the setting, the people, and the celebrations very exciting. Through these plans, all of us look forward to commemorating this part of America's bicentennial birthday.

*Melvin T. Smith, Chairman
Dominguez-Escalante State-Federal Bicentennial Committee*